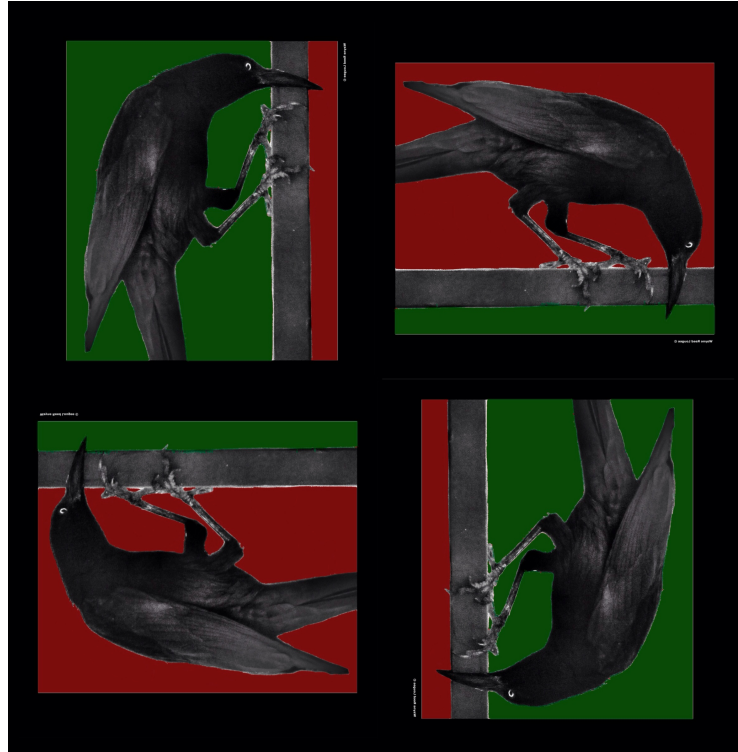
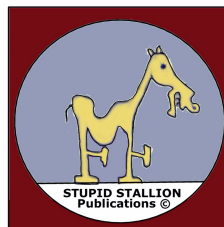


Living a Creative Life



By
Wayne Reed Lougee



Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: Why should I want to be more creative?

Chapter 2: Playing in the basement

Chapter 3: Observations of my childhood or the creative process

Chapter 4: Spending time in your head

Chapter 5: Asking questions that shouldn't be asked

Chapter 6: Extending your senses

Chapter 7: Exploring the three dimensional myth

Chapter 8: There is no box... head..

Chapter 9: Applying creativity principles to your special talents

Chapter 10: Barriers to creative thinking

Chapter 11: Head noise

Chapter 12: Follow the leader

Chapter 13: Fear of being the leader

Chapter 14: Untapped gifts

Chapter 15: Time

Chapter 16: Discouragement

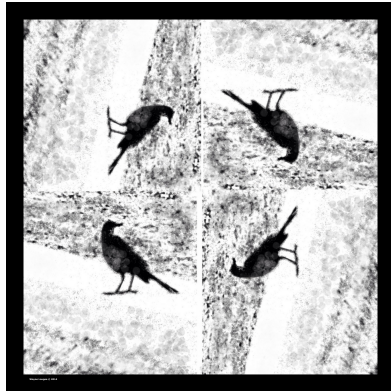
Chapter 17 Competition with the wrong foe

Conclusion: Benefits of a creative life. What will you leave behind?

Introduction

Creativity is an elusive, little understood concept. New ideas are often described as coming to an individual in the form of a spark, like a bolt of lightening out of Heaven. To one watching the creative process unfold, either as the creator of the idea or merely an observer, it may seem as if one moment there is nothing and then an instant later the creative idea is born. It may seem as if something has been created out of nothing. But, did the great ideas that brought mankind out of the Dark Ages into the modern world we now live in, really come just from mere lightening bolts or even small sparks of new thought? If this is to be believed, then creativity is nothing more than chance. It would depend upon some lucky person standing in the right place at the right time just to be hit with that creative bolt.

People are also described as being either being creative or non-creative. If we are to believe that creativity comes by mere chance, then we could also describe people as being lucky or unlucky. Is it reasonable to believe that the spark of creativity will only hit one person and not another? Is it not more probable that creativity is a life-long pursuit, a process of asking questions no one else has asked and the thinking out the many possible answers to those questions? True, the last step in the creative process may seem as if it came from a spark of inspiration, but would that spark really spark only by chance? Could it be possible that everyone has been born with the capability to create, but this capability may or may not always be activated? It is possible. Anyone can increase their creative capacity by understanding and practicing the creative process.



So how does one learn to become creative? Is creativity a quality, a gift, or an inherent attribute that is bestowed at birth? Can creativity be learned? These are truly some of life's greatest questions that have been pondered upon ever since that famous, but still unknown person figured out that round rolls easier than square. We still do not know or understand all the answers, and there are still many important questions out there that have yet to be thought of, let alone asked, but it seems to be true that everyone comes into this world with innate gifts and talents, that if exercised, will bring us all a little closer to the ultimate understanding creative thinking.



Chapter 1: Why would anyone want to become more creative?

I once had a conversation with an associate of mine regarding our differences in personality and how we both view the world in very different ways. This associate, who I will call Mary, is a self-confessed linear thinker. Mary, who by all standards is an extremely intelligent person, had on several occasions indicated



that she could not understand me or the way in which my thought process worked. She could only explain my way of thinking as being all over the place and in such un-orderly confusion that left all understanding impossible. At one point in the conversation, she turned to me and in an almost accusingly manner and exclaimed, "you are creative aren't you?" Thinking this to be a compliment, I of course said "yes." And then Mary said something very surprising to me. She said, "I don't like creativity! I like predictability." At that point, Mary's boss who had been listening to our exchange chimed in by saying, "I agree with Mary." Both these individuals wanted to see the people they worked with following set procedures that do not change from day to day or person to person. Creative thinking represented a threat to their well-ordered world.

The attitudes described above, may not be representative of the norm, but over my many years of working in a large bureaucracy, I have personally found a higher percentage of non-creative, linear thinkers in positions of authority than are found in the general population. I recognize this last statement is not a scientific fact or finding, but if this statement has any truth in it at all, it may be true that there may be a general aversion to creative thinking in both schools and the workplace.

So, why would anyone find value in making the attempt to increase their creative capability? Although, the last thing I would want to do is to discourage creativity, you need to understand up front that creativity always comes with a price. That price whether great or small will exact a toll that must be understood and accepted. The price exacted may be time, effort, money, respect, support, or more likely the misunderstanding of others, but in all cases a price will be paid. One cannot expect to make progress with anything and expect a so-called free ride. So before any discussion the benefits of living a creative life can take place, I would like to point out a few of the obstacles that some may encounter as they strive to understand ideas, concepts, and solutions that may never have been understood or discovered before.

I have always been what I call a "thinker." I think about my daily tasks from every angle possible as I am doing my work. Many times I will continue to chew on a tough work problem in my quiet off time. But, what has such "over" thinking really done for me in my life or on the job? Over the years, I have continued to received one piece of advice from my fellow workers no matter what job I may have been doing. This advice is: "Don't think too much about the job; just do what you are told to do and you won't get into trouble. The boss knows what is wanted and we should give the boss exactly what is asked for, even if we know to plan to be flawed." In other words, get back to work and stop thinking. Creative ideas are not welcome because there is nothing broken and therefore nothing to fix. Thinkers just get in the way of progress.

Even in the face of such resistance, I still fight back saying, "I know a better way." I fight back not because I believe someone might actually listen to my idea, but because I have learned to enjoy living the life of a creative thinker. I have learned how stay creative even when it is not wanted. Others may not take my ideas and change the way their world turns, but I have learned the joy of self satisfaction through an increased awareness of my world, how it works, and how I can change my own life.

Some may say that there is no room for too much independent thinking in today's world. We need to establish common standards so that all may work together. People with their own ideas tend to "rock the boat", slow the production process, and cause problems for everyone else. Big thinkers are thought as people who merely produce "pie in the sky" concepts that can never be used or conformed to real world standards. In short, thinkers need to quit thinking and get back to work.

With so much negative feedback encouraging all to conform and do things the way things have always been done, why would anyone want to step out of the so-called comfort zone and produce a new idea, create something different, or devise a better way of getting the job done? There must be a powerful intrinsic reward for someone to want to develop their creative side, especially when it would seem that creative thought is not only unwanted or unappreciated, and it is rarely understood, rewarded, or used.

But, some may also point out that if all new innovation that become successful in the marketplace was born of creative thought, how is it that I can claim that creative thought is rarely understood, rewarded, or used? The answer to question should be obvious. Most creator, artists, inventors and big picture thinkers fail in the eyes of the world much more often than they succeed. The term "starving artist" comes to mind almost every time a young person decides to go into the arts rather than a "real" profession.

The benefits of living a creative life cannot always be valued with money or popularity. A truly creative mind must learn to find personal joy in the creative process even when the products of that mind is misunderstood by the world. One may develop ten, fifteen, or even a hundred great ideas before one of those ideas is ever appreciated by someone else. Of course the one success is something to celebrate, but a creative person finds ways to cherish, save, and reuse the other ninety-nine.

I have created many a piece of art that will just amaze me and make me wonder how I could have ever produced something so wonderful and appealing, just to find out that I am the only one who feels the same way. Yet, because I was the artist and I understood and appreciated the process it took to produce the piece of art, I do not need anyone else's opinion for me to love what I have created. Obviously there is no monetary value in something no one wants, but I find that there is an intrinsic value to the true artist that is greater than many a commission.

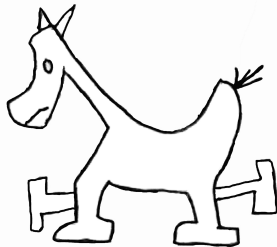
The creative life not only can bring a deep personal satisfaction in what one has produced, it also fosters a more complete life of wonderment and joy that the non-creative mind may never know. It has given me a real purpose for living and has ensured that I will pass down to my children a wonderful inheritance of art, books, and ideas. When all is said and done, it will be the creative ones who will be remembered. They will be remembered because only they will have created that which is unique.

The creative person very often stands alone, away from the crowd. There will always be potentially creative people standing in the crowd, but until they choose to walk away from their risk free, predictable life following the latest fad, or worse, wasting their minds, the creative seed inside them will possibly wither and die. Following the crowd and constantly entertaining one's self by feeding and wasting one's mind on the creative productions of others rarely leads to an exemplary life worthy of remembrance. No one will ever record every person who has seen or will see the Mona Lisa, but the world will never forget who created her.

In this book, I rely heavily on my own personal experiences to illustrate certain creative principles. In this first story, one that I have titled "This is a Horse", I demonstrate how I learned to value one of my own talents at an early age and how it led to a better understanding of my inner creative self. The events retold here may be somewhat humorous, but the creative outcome of this story has continued to bless my life even until today.

High school, as with most people, was a very fundamental development period for me. It was in high school that I began to understand the basic principles I would need to develop my artistic talents and dreams. The teenage years can be very hard on a young person and many of my friends learned very

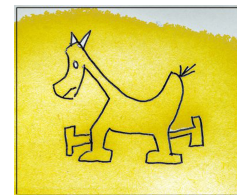
quickly to just blend in with the crowd in order to avoid the ridicule of being different. According to the unwritten social rules of my high school, and possibly most like schools, only a few students were allowed to stand out from the crowd. These usually included the varsity quarterback, the prom queen, the universally anointed class clown, and possibly the class academic brain. Everyone else was expected to take their assigned place and complain. I didn't like my assigned place. I was a terrible athlete, socially not prom material, and couldn't compete grade-wise with Dan the class valedictorian. My best chance of breaking out of the crowd was to compete for the class clown position. This where the horse comes in to this story



This is a drawing of the horse. I had always been interested in art and made sure my schedule included an art class every year from seventh grade through my first year in college. In junior high, the art teachers were kind, but did not enforce the discipline needed to push the students to learn basic artistic development. But, for my three years in high school, Miss Hoag, later to be called Mrs. Page, taught art with a discipline that would not bend. I was a fairly good artist and I did thrive under Mrs. Page's tutelage, but one day while just doodling I created an odd drawing of a cartoon horse. Although, not a masterpiece by any definition, I was mesmerized by what I had created.

The horse had a distinct swayed back, long neck, and a tail made of stubble. What was most interesting to me was that both the front and rear left feet were fixed to the ground, but the right fore foot stuck straight out towards the front and the rear left leg was positioned the same with the exception of pointing straight backwards. The obvious joke was that any such horse in this particular position would fall on its side if it were not stuck to a piece of drawing paper. I quickly finished my drawing by adding the title, "This is a Horse" because it was possible that someone could fail to understand what the creature really was.

Mrs. Page had a length of wall set aside for showing off the best of her students art work. That morning, while under the influence of wonderment that the horse would not fall off the the paper, I taped it to wall with all the other art classics. Mrs. Page, having more traditional art discipline than an eye for understanding the impossible, saw the drawing, tore it down, identified me as the culprit, and threw the paper in the trash. The next day she came into her class room only to find the horse back in its place on the wall. Almost every day for the rest of the year, the horse appeared on the wall of the art room and then was thrown away.



It was years later that I realized that I could see something creative and maybe even useful in that simple cartoon horse that my teacher couldn't or didn't take the time to see. I found that through my creative eye that I could learn to see things that others could not see.

Over the years, I found that creative people truly do live fuller lives, not only because they are. able to see things others cannot see, but they also experience feelings others cannot feel. In fact, every human sense or sensation can be enhanced through enhancing creative thought and practices.



Chapter one questions and exercises:

1. Do you or those who know you feel you are a creative person? Even if the answer is no or I don't know, do you want to develop more creative thought in your life?
2. Has the thought of failure or negative feedback ever stopped you from trying to do something you would like to try? How can you overcome such feelings.
3. Make a list of your talents. You may need input from others if you feel you do not have any talents. Indicate on this list which talents you would be willing to invest time in so as to improve upon them.
4. List other areas in your life for which you lack creativity. Decide whether or not any item on this list is worth your time to improve?

Chapter 2: Playing in the basement

In my family, I was the third child of seven children. My older sister and brother, though not that much older than myself, were emotionally too old to play games with me, my two younger sisters and my two younger brothers. So it came to be that I became family games master. I was unofficially the one responsible for determining and in most cases inventing the games we would play.



We were well acquainted with the art of inventing children's games. Our Aunt Sheryl and to a smaller extent our Uncle Carl had introduced various games for us to play during our summer visits to our grandpa's farm. Carl taught us to play one game that called for two teams positioned on opposite sides of the farmhouse. A ball would be tossed back and forth over the roof until one team choose to sneak around to the other side of the house and try to hit one of the opposite team members with the ball. The attacking team scored a point for the hit or lost a point if there was no hit or if the ball was caught. Sheryl also taught us a rhyming game about trying to keep a witch out of the house after our mother had left us home alone. We loved going to the farm each summer

because we loved playing such made up and creative games. When we went home from the farm, we would continue to play the same games, sometimes creating variations on the same themes.

Associating with creative aunts and uncles, brought different creative results to my family members, but for me, I learned how to make life into a game. For the most part we all learned to love playing games, especially non-commercial ones, the ones that didn't come in a box from the store. However, these experiences also taught me that I too was capable of creating fun. From the time of my youth on, and even today, my brothers and sisters still rely on me to start the fun or create the spontaneous group activities.

In our house on Ochoco Avenue, the house I grew up in, we had a very scary basement. I shared a room down there with my brother Ken for several years. Ordinarily no one wanted to venture down the dark stairway (the light switch was at the bottom) but I soon found that I could market that scary atmosphere in a playful way that would entice my younger brothers and sisters down into my haunted world.

One day, possibly while I was lying on my bed or the floor just thinking what I could do next, I realize that the cheap tiled basement ceiling, held in place with framework of metal strips, could support a hanging blanket secured with clothes pins. After I hung one blanket, I quickly realized that I could hang more blankets. And, then the idea was born. I could design a wonderful maze that would then generate multiple fun games to play. I envisioned playing tag or chase in the maze with the lights either on or off. My maze became one of my greatest childhood successes. Over forty years later, my family still talks about the great fun we had playing in the basement blanket maze.

I made up other games downstairs in the scary basement that also enticed my family to come down and play. One time, I took every toy block, Lincoln Log, strip of wood, etc. that I could find and turned the entire bedroom floor into small scale city with buildings, roads, and highways. My brothers and I found hours of fun in recreating tv car chase scenes with our toy cars and miniature city.

I was born with a craving to discover. Discover what, I did not know or care. I guess I just wanted to discover fun. My imagination had no bounds and luckily my parents either looked the other way or really did not know what I was capable of doing or what I dared to do. The other kids relied on me to get something started and my imagination usually did not let them down.



Curiosity can often work as the catalyst for inspiring creative activity. I have always been curious of how things work and why people act as they do. This curiosity has led to many an interesting situation and in some cases inspired creative ideas that have enriched my whole life. In fact, it is hard for me to even conceive of a creative person who is not also a curious person. The following is a story of how I became a very creative coin collector.

One day, when our parents were out of the house, I remember laying on the floor in the family room, the room which was connected the the basement stairs, and thinking that I wanted something to do, but just couldn't think of anything fun. I was laying by our old full-upright piano when an idea sprung into my head. I wondered if I could take it to pieces and put it back again. I wasn't so worried, even though I ought have been, of not putting it back together before my parents came home, but I was more

worried I might not be able to reassemble the piano so as to function correctly.

You see, I my curiosity had already led me to take many a watch apart without being able restore even one to working condition.



I began with only a hammer, a pair pliers, and a screwdriver. I removed the top and the back with little problems. Taking the full-sized harp out was not an easy task, but I managed it all by myself. Then as I was completing my disassembly of the rest of the framework, I spotted a metal object lying in the dust on the base of the piano floor. As I picked it up, I quickly realized the object was a coin, but it wasn't until I cleaned it off that I found that it was an 1869 Indian Head Penny. I was so amazed that I quickly put the piano back into working order and waited for my mother to return to tell her of my find.

When she returned, I told my mother everything, even about the piano. I can't remember how angry she was with me for taking the piano apart, but I learned something from my mother. She took the coin from me, not as punishment, but because she wanted it for her collection. By the time she eventually gave it back to me, my curiosity about coin collecting had already been implanted in my head.

Over the years, I have put together one of the the most creative coin and small object collection of which I know. The collection has very little worldly value, but, I believe it to be quite unique as to its contents. It contains many of our family dog tags, not the military type, but real dog tags worn by our family pets. There are coins, real, not so real, and commemorative, including small Chinese coins from my maternal grandmother and a quarter from my paternal grandfather's wallet.

I believe that most children are curious about the world around the and express that curiously in creative ways. One of the best ways to tap into one's creative self is to look back at the childhood experiences that brought enjoyment. As you examine you life, ask yourself whether or not you are still as curious as you

were as a child? Do you today still seek for creative solutions with the same level of energy as your younger self? Not all childhood creative ideas end up successful, but there will always be something to learn from even the failures?



One of my great creative failures happened in my sixth grade English class. We had been assigned to read a full book, what are called chapter books by today's youth, and then write a book report. I had never actually read an entire book of this size before and did not do so for this assignment. I had picked a book which had a large illustration on the first page of chapter one, leaving room on the page for only one initial paragraph. I read that paragraph and nothing more. The time came for handing in our reports and I needed a creative way to write a report on a book I had not actually read. And then, the idea struck me. I had read a portion of the book, even if it had only been the opening paragraph, so I did have some knowledge on which to write a report.

With the knowledge of one paragraph and the content of one illustration, I deftly described every fact I knew to be true of the book which I had not fully read. I cannot remember much of that book report, but it is quite possible that my report exceeded in length, not in information, that of the original opening paragraph. I felt I have been very creative in describing the contents of a great book. However, I found I had one problem which I had not thought to cover. I didn't know how the book ended. Any other child may have thought to read the last page also, but no such thought entered my mind. I had a more creative way of solving this problem. I simply added the following line to the end of my paper: "if you would like to find out how this book ends, you will have to read it yourself."

Creative solution, right? Maybe, maybe not, but unfortunately even a below average teacher would see through such a ruse. And, this is exactly what happened. However my lesson in childhood creativity did not end there. When the teacher stated straight out that I "had not read the book", I answered honestly saying "yes I did!" And thus I began another lifelong study on the topic of "creative honesty."



Chapter two questions and exercises:

1. What do you remember of your childhood experiences? Were you curious? If so, can you describe what you were curious about? Do you feel you were creative? What creative experiences do you remember?
2. How have your childhood experiences affected your adult life? Do you experience the same levels of curiosity and creativity as when you were younger? If not, why do you think that is so? If yes, how has that helped you in becoming successful?
3. Looking back, have you learned from both your positive and negative experiences?

4. What do you feel were barriers for you in developing creative thinking as a child? Do such barriers still affect your life? What actions can you take to overcome such barriers?
5. Write down in a journal, three to four childhood experiences in which you expressed curiosity or creativity.



Chapter 3: Observations of childhood or the creative process



Is it possible to teach adults to live more creative lives and to expand their curiosity both in life and thought? Or in other words, is there a creative process that can be learned and developed? In the previous chapter I wrote about several of my childhood creative experiences. It seems fair to say that children either are more creative than adults, or what is more probable, children do not suppress their creative self as many adults tend to do.

I was first exposed to this theory when reading the "creative thinking" classic, *Drawing on the Right-Side of the Brain* by xxxxxxxxxxxx. The theory is that children can create without having to judge whether or not their creations accurately reflect the real world or the world as seen through the adult eye.

However, as the child ages, the expectations of achieving accurate real-world representations become harder and harder until the individual gives up trying to draw or create.

If this theory is correct, then it is the child from whom the adult should learn. The following are several lessons that may be learned from adults studying the child:

1. Achieving adult-like accuracy may not be the best goal
2. Learn to enjoy the process as much as the product
3. Regain the ability to play
4. Attain adult goals through child-like play
5. Relearn how to set aside harsh self judgements

1. Achieving adult-like accuracy may not be the best goal

What does adult-like accuracy really mean? To me it means that adults have trained themselves to see only what they believe adults are supposed to see. Or, in some cases, adults are coached to say they see what is supposed to be seen. An old, but true example of this principle is found in the children story, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, where it took a child to point out what surely should have been obvious to all.

A real-life example of benefits of "unlearning to see as an adult" can be found in the work of the impressionist painters of the late 19th century. For years, painters had been painting shadows as black patches of unlit space because "everyone" knew that shadows are black. But, when the impressionists started really looking at color in their new "unschooled" way, they discovered that shadows were not black, but a combination of many different colors. This important discovery came to these artists as a child might gaze at colors never before seen. It was through this almost child-like gaze they were able understand that green trees in the bright sunshine can cast reddish-tinted shadows, and human skin under the proper lighting can actually seem to be green.



In this drawing, entitled "Five Trees", which was drawn with art crayons and modified with several computer applications, I have followed the impressionists' theory of green casting red shadows. This is just one example where my obsession with colors of opposite tones actually drove me to create much more vivid drawings than I had drawn previously. These experiments led me to re-examine not only how I looked at colors, but also how I viewed other processes of life that many people rarely question.

In my photography, I started taking pictures from angles and positions that most people might shy away from. I would ask myself what a room may look like from the ceiling or how the ceiling looks from the floor. I tried experiments with taking photos of only half a face. I took pictures of mundane everyday objects like a bathroom sink and then I would process and sometimes hang such pictures as if they were treasured family portraits.



In all of these experiments, I was learning how to see the world in a way in which no one else had ever seen before. Sometimes my experiments might hit the jackpot and I would produce artwork that everyone seemed to love, but most the time I would just get odd responses such as, "interesting, what is it?" When I get the "what is it" response, it is good for me to remember that "public" failure and how I rebound from such failures, is a large part of the creative process.

2. Learn to enjoy the process as much as the product

Whether they admit it or not, children crave learning. Some may not enjoy formal learning such as in school, but all children desire to learn. Learning is the way we discover the processes of how the world works. Childhood play is one of the best ways for children to learn and discover. I will have more to say about playing below. But, one of the more important concepts that I have observed from my own experience is that playing is fun. When playing becomes learning and learning leads to a productive creative process, most children will say they had fun just participating in the creation process above and beyond enjoying what it is that they actually have produced.



One Sunday, during church, I found myself occupied with the entertainment of a young child so as to let his mother pay better attention to the service. I opened a drawing program on my electronic tablet and let the young boy just draw. At times I would change the color for him, but the most part of the drawing was his own creation. My young friend had a great time just watching the colors and lines rolling off the tip of his fingers. The whole creative process kept him really quite happy until the time the service ended. In the end, he had enjoyed the act of drawing without realizing he had actually created a very pleasing work of

art as can be seen above.



I used a very similar approach to create the following picture of a young bird crying for a meal. The same drawing application produced this child-like background as with the earlier drawing, on top of which, I applied the black cut-out photograph of a baby bird. Maybe not a classic piece of art, but this was really something fun to create.

Adults who can recapture the joy of the process will tend to be more creative, and therefore possibly more productive than their less creative co-workers. I have found that when I turn tasks into games, I enjoy the

task more and I generally deliver a better product. This is how the ability to invent your own games as discussed in the last chapter can continue to bless your life

3. Regain the ability to play

Of course most if not all adults play games at times, but do they really play or do they just follow a predetermined set of rules to see who is the best at a certain activity? There is a distinction between playing organized, established or commercially purchased games and exhibiting playfulness. From my observation, many adults compartmentalize their life experiences. They may have a time for work, a time for home responsibilities, a time for just relaxing, and a time to play a game or two. Many adults however do not know how mix the art of play with the other areas of their lives so as to become more creative at work or at home, etc. Playfulness is an attitude that must be nurtured and channeled effectively if one wants to maintain a higher level of creativity. Appropriate playfulness in a well-adjusted adult can be refreshing and invigorating to others and is generally not be seen as mere childish behavior. But, there is a thin line between acting childish and maintaining a child-like ability to make a game out of work.



If you are one who seems to have lost the ability to play or to apply playful principles in your everyday problem solving efforts, you may want to exam why this has happened. There are ways to



Cleaning out the dishwasher

Later chapters will address distractions to creativity, but one must first want to jump start the creative urge before beginning to understand the distractions.

4. Attain adult goals through child-like play

Can an adult be retained to understand and implement the principles of play as understood by a child? I think the answer to this question depends on the answer to the next question: Can adult goals be attained though playful principles?

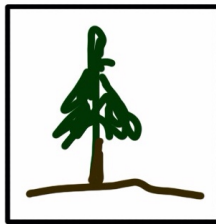
I have taught an adult religious doctrine class at church for many years. The teachers who held that responsibly before me would teach line by line from the manual, lecturing where the book said to lecture and questioning where the book said question. The doctrine taught may have been correct, but the delivery was dry and unimaginative. Many of the adult class members

often found reasons not to attend. I was one of those who found other things to than to endure that hour of lecturing.

When I started teaching this class, I decided that I needed to adapt a new method of teaching if I were to reclaim the class members outside in the hallways. I looked to my childhood sense of curiosity and decided that every class I taught had to be different in tone and presentation from the other lessons. I brought in ways to stimulate multiple senses. Every week I would write a poem to be placed on the blackboard which summed up to lesson topic. I took and displayed photographs or personal works of art that could inspire group discussion. At times I would have the class sing songs and then try to get the class to find parallels between the songs and the topic. Over time, I realized that I was just making up games to keep the class' attention. And, the result was that as the class started to play along, others from to hallway began to look in to see what I was presenting. The class size grew because I used the principles of play to entice learning.

5. Relearn how to set aside harsh self judgments

The last principle learned from childhood may be the most important one to understand. To be creative, an adult must learn from the child how to judge one's progress with a child-like excitement. A child may draw a tree which looks like this and feel that it is a great picture.



But, many adults would be embarrassed to be asked to draw such a tree, at least to draw it and have it shown in public. How many adults would feel comfortable drawing this picture, framing it and hanging it on their office wall? I think most would be uncomfortable, but why? Probably the first thought would be, "this looks very childish." Then the adult judgment engine turns on and the adult will harshly compare this drawing with an actual tree and declare this drawing not worthy of adult appreciation.





Now, take a look at this tree above and ask yourself if it was drawn by a youth or an adult. This tree is more detailed than the first and it leans to the left. Also, a striking difference is that it not only has a tree house, but the tree has actually grown through the house. There is evidence of child-like creativity. The fact that the tree is leaning may upset the artistic judgment of Many adults. On the other hand, a child might be quite amazed with this drawing and may study it with curiosity trying to figure out how such a situation could happen. The child's judgment is not as harsh as the adult. The child accepts the drawing for what it is, an interesting situation.

The above potted plant, although not in a traditional setting, is much more acceptable to the adult mind. There is a greater attempt at presenting the objects in a three dimensional setting with shading and shadows. But, what makes the drawing better than the first drawing? In a child's world the answer may not be absolutely nothing, because even children though they may not judge as harshly, will have an opinion of what they like. But, unlike the child, the adult seems to have a greater amount of difficulty finding the value in the first drawing. Why is that?

I believe that in many cases adults fear that they have not progressed artistically since the time when all they could draw was the first tree. And, if they were to try today, that is what they would produce. They have not learned to appreciate what they can produce and then work on improving.

Here is the same drawing we started out with, after a few more lines have been added. With persistence and the ability to withhold judgment. The little sketch can fill out and become a richer artistic experience. For a fuller creative experience, adults need to learn to judge and value their abilities and creations with a child-like eye.

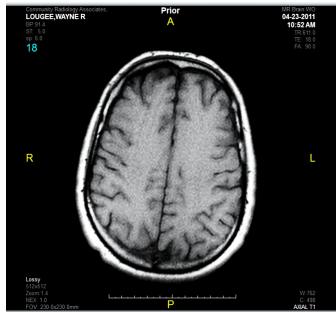


Chapter Questions and Exercises:

1. Can you remember a scene, a piece of art, a tune, or an activity from your childhood that you really enjoyed, but have put on your brain's "back burner?" Can you remember why you liked it? Did you try to reproduce it in some way as a child? Would you be willing to try again as an adult?
2. Is there any aspect of your adult life or job that can be enhanced by lessons learned from child's play? Can you find a creative way to bring play into to workplace or to treat some monotonous process as a game. Can playfulness or game improve production? Will it help you enjoy the process as much as getting to the finish line.
3. Draw a tree. Set it aside for a day. Go back to your drawing and look it over. Decide if you can live with this tree, or draw a second one. You only want to take one to three turns of producing a draw of a tree that you can use. Once you have selected a drawing, ask yourself what you like and don't like about the drawing. Hang it in a public place for one

week and ask others to tell you what they like and don't like about the drawing. This exercise has two purposes. First, it will help break the ice as to displaying something you have created. Second, you can experiment with the various critiques to see if you can create another drawing that you can like even better. But, the bottom line is to see if you can find something you like in something you have created.

Chapter Four: Spending Time in Your Head



I start this chapter with a real-life scan of my own brain. I didn't always like my "brain" or at least felt I had a "good" one. I grew up in a small, tough, rural west coast town where I went to school with children, many of which did not come from a family steeped with an educational tradition. As a non-linear thinker in a town which didn't encourage creative thought, I never felt I was competing with most of my friends in the same environment and therefore I felt I must be dumber than children my age. It was much later that I understood my classmates and some of the teachers were just spending time until we could leave school to pursue lifelong careers in the mill or on a ranch. I wasn't pushed intellectually and I didn't push myself either. I just floated through school, spending most of my time in my head.

"Spending time in one's head", what does this mean? This is the brain activity that goes on in your head when nothing else is going on. Some may call this daydreaming, or acting like Walter Mitty. If you are too young to know who Walter Mitty is, I suggest you view the film of the same name.

How you you spend the time when you are all by yourself in your thoughts? Is this productive time? Are your thoughts creative? Do you ask questions about the world around you and then attempt to answer them? Do you try to find answers that defy logic or physical laws? Can you reach beyond the restrictions of the "real world" and answer questions based on creative non-real world rules and principles? Or, do you tune out your thoughts?

Creativity is born of thought. This is a pure and simple principle. If after a long day of work, you come home and become an intellectual vegetable by turn off the thought process, the creative process will also be in the off position. That personal dialogue within your head is where most of your creations will first take shape and therefore should be cultivated and exercised. This chapter is all about how to make better use of your "head time" in order to live a more creative life.



Sick could not think...

In this chapter I will discuss the follow topics which will help you better access and use the personal creative dialogue that happens in your head:

1. Time
2. Schedule
3. Purpose
4. Structure and non-structure
5. Random
6. Situational
7. Rules
8. Documentation

Time, in general belongs to you. Especially "head time." Granted there are times when your attention belongs to someone else when participating in a certain complicated or dangerous procedures, but for the most part your thought time belongs to you. Sometimes you can split your time, such as thinking while driving, or washing the dishes. But, in general, you can decide with what to fill your head at most points within your time here on earth. If you decide to use your time to fill your head with mindless garbage (need not be explained), your personal time is wasted. I make it a priority to exercise my thought process in my head where ever possible.



Some of my greatest ideas have come shower, driving, and even while having while ago, while semi lying down in the two hands both in my mouth



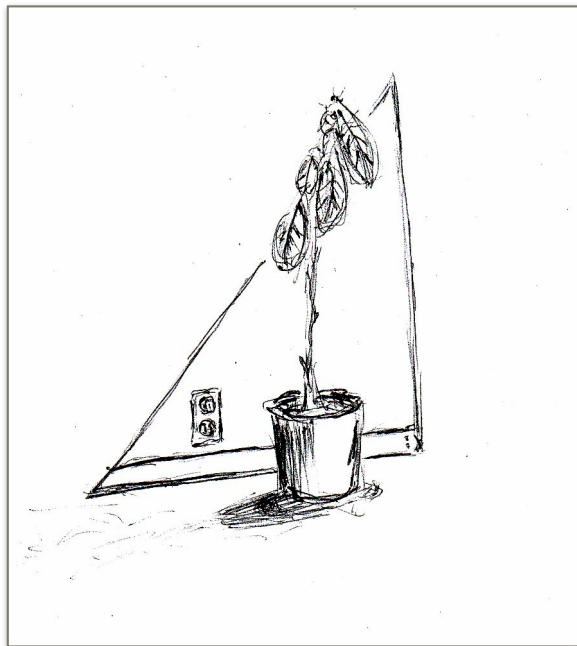
while I was talking to myself in the bath, my teeth cleaned at the dentist's office. A dentist chair with my dental hygienist's accompanied with a slew of metal utensils,

I remember thinking how interesting my view was at that particular moment and how I wished I had a camera implanted in my eye so as to record that awkward view.

Sometimes I find that I need to schedule my head time, especially when I am trying to work on or finish a project. I find that If the atmosphere is not right, I cannot start the the thought process in my head. Most of the concepts that I have included in this book were conceived and written in doctor's waiting rooms. For some reason a waiting room was the best place for me to write and so I found my self arriving early for my doctor's appointment so as to schedule time to think and write. On the other hand, many of my illustrations and photos included in this book were created while seated in my living room easy chair after a long day in the office. Over time I have learned to schedule my creative head time when and where I find I do my best work.

You may ask why I devote a chapter to an activity that comes natural to everyone and within the space of any 24 hours, most people have to spend some time alone thinking. I cannot deny that it is true, we all think and our brains never really shut down. Even when we sleep, our brains a chugging away stirring up dreams and keeping our bodies running. So, what do I mean be "head time" or spending time in my head? I make a distinction between normal thinking and thinking with a creative purpose. This is not to say that I always start out with a purpose when I find myself in a creative mood. Sometimes a thought or a smell, or something I chance to see will start me thinking and in this case the purpose comes second. At other times, I may already have a purpose and just need to find the creative muse.

In my life, the creative purpose often takes the form of looking to cause trouble. I spoke earlier of having a bit of the class clown in me. During my first year at the University of Oregon, I shared an apartment with my brother Ken and our hometown friend, Steve. Steve and I return home to our apartment earlier than my brother Ken, Ken being in law school and having to study more than myself. I was looking to create a little trouble, or in other words, I have a vague purpose, however I had not yet found my muse. Looking around the room, Steve and I found two items that always seem to go together, an apple (my brother's apple) and a tube of superglue. I had my purpose, that being to get on my brother's nerves and I had my muse, an apple and a tube of superglue. Now all I needed was to complete the creative process by developing a plan. The purpose came easy to me, having over 20 years of preparation. The muse was handy and required little effort, but in this case the plan took a bit more creative thought.



The whole plan did not come to me all at once, but I learned very quickly that the only place to superglue an apple in a college apartment was to the living room ceiling. This effort took several tries as that apples do not general like to be glued to a ceiling, however once it was stuck there, there it stayed.

The following is an exact transcript of the conversation which took place between Ken and myself when he walked in the room:

Ken: What's my apple doing on the ceiling?

Me: What apple?

Ken: That apple there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

..... (Time passes, but the conversation continues.).....

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.



Chapter 5: Asking questions that are never asked

Recently, I was riding in the car with my wife, who is a very creative person in her own way, but also, unlike myself, very practical, somewhat more logical. We passed an office (actually it was a house pretending to be an office) with a sign planted in the yard indicating a psychic was employed inside. The sign got me thinking and after a long period of thought lasting at least ten or so seconds, I blurted out the following question: What would inspire a person to grow up to be a psychic?

My wife, being practical and logical, was both paying attention to her driving so as to avoid an accident and trying to figure out which lane she needed to be in so as to ensure we would arrive at our destination, took less than ten seconds (it was closer to .5 seconds) to answer my deeply thought out question. She said, "I don't know." Her answer, considering the circumstances (and also because I know she will read this book), also well thought out and to the point.

Sensing that the question had not been completely worked over and not sensing my wife did not share my same level of curiosity regarding this topic, I began to offer up my own theories as to why a person would take up a psychic career, after all, I had been studying this question now for almost 12 seconds. I had practically become the world's number one experience on questioning the career choice of a psychic. I explained that psychics had to fall into one of two categories, either they were frauds or they were mentally ill.

My wife, though she didn't say so in as many words, left me with the impression that I may have not covered the complete spectrum of answers to my

Chapter 6: Extending your senses

I come from a long line of dog owners. I cannot remember any great length of time that my family did not have a dog of one sort or another. Over the years I have come to appreciate the lessons we can learn from our pets. Working dogs in particular have been bred and trained to use their senses in the employment of their duties.

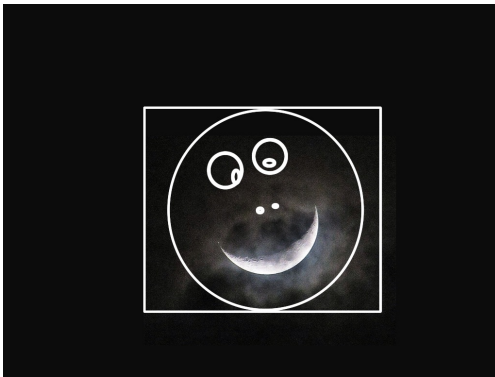
Our Italian Greyhound is now going on 17 years old. He is a sight hound that has lived his life depending on both his speed and sight. Now in his old age he suffers from arthritis and cataracts and so he has had to adapt his life by relying on other senses, including touch, smell, and sound.

Our Wire-Haired Fox Terrier really never did see all that well. With those long shabby eyebrows covering his sensitive eyes, he has relied on both smell and sound to guide him. When I toss him a slice of peeled apple, I usually have to tap my foot on the floor near the apple slice before he will find it. Our terrier loves exotic smells. After coming out of the bath smelling so nice, he will beg to go outside just to roll in something stinky that better appeals to his tastes.

The fact is that our pet dogs really depend on their various senses to get through the day. When input from one sense becomes blocked, they adapt their lives by depending on other senses. We have not only been

born with personal gifts and talents, most of us have access to our five senses, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting. In my life I like to think of each one as a pallet from which I can select colors to paint with.

There is no box



One of my favorite movies is a not well received, long forgotten film directed by a young Jack Nicholson titled Head. In fact, it was just a silly movie starring the TV musical group The Monkeys which either had no plot or at least appeared to most views to be devoid of plot. Throughout the film, the four singers spend much of their time either outside or inside of confining or box-like spaces, ending up by freeing themselves only to discover that they were still trapped into a large glass fish aquarium. Why do I call this one of my favorite movies? Because, it was this movie that first got me thinking that it may not matter if I am in or outside of the box if there no matter what I do I will always find myself stuck

within an even larger box. I then began to wonder what if there isn't a box to begin with. This chapter is dedicated to "the box" even if it doesn't exist.

No matter where you go, people are always talking about people who are said to think outside of the box. What exactly is an outside of the box thinker? For that matter, what is this so-called box? Is there a relationship between "the box" and "the wall", meaning whether an out of the box thinker is the same as an off the wall thinker?

To better understand this conversation of boxes and possibly walls, we first need to explore our traditional terminology relating to creative thinking and how such terminology may actually lead many to accept a lower level of creative abilities instead of encouraging all to strive for greater excellence. In fact by inventing the box, our own words may have in some ways doomed us all to remain inside of one box or another. I believe that unless we blow up the box, not merely escape from it, we can never understand our true potential.

What is this box that supposedly restricts our ability to think and to solve problems? Have we created the box in our own minds? If thinking outside of the box is a good thing and not all people are considered out of the box thinkers, the logical conclusion is that all the people who remain in the box are incapable of thinking extraordinary thoughts. Again, if such a box exists, who is it that place people either in or out of the box? This concept of a box, truly boxes people into at least two bins, the "in the box" bin and the "out of the box" bin. To follow this logic further, any thing or person that can be binned can also be boxed. Therefore, to put the out of the box thinker in a bin merely places that innovator back into another box that will in turn further confine creative thought. The whole box concept runs contrary to the idea that everyone can learn to produce creative thought, not just those labeled as being out of one box or another.

The concept of the wall is somewhat related to the box. Although we usually don't refer to creative thinkers as being off the wall thinkers (it is usually an idea, not a person, that is usually referred to as being off the wall), the principle is similar. Anything that is labeled on or off the wall is in one made up box or another and can therefore restrict creative thought.

So what would happen if we refused to believe in either the box or the wall? What good, if any, could come of such a belief? And, even more interesting to me is why do we, our environment, and/or our society continually try to keep people and ideas in boxes. I will begin with the last question first.

I find it interesting that in our modern society, the advancements of technologies, especially those technologies that are supposed to make our lives easier, also seem to require us more and more to divide our very lives up into various entries on various forms, resulting in binning the modern person into hundreds and thousands of boxes. My medical and governmental and other records box me up into bins reflecting my size, weight, income, employment, political party, religious beliefs, mental status, marital status, diet, traffic violations, interests, race, and place of origin. I can list hundreds more boxes that supposedly when put all together make up the whole that is the real me. After, slicing and dicing me into these many boxes, I am told that to be really creative I need to think outside of the box.

Boxing people gives comfort to both people and it is usually a idea, not a person, that is usually referred to as being off the wall is no wonder that personal, societal, and environmental forces work together to keep us comfortable and safe in one box or another.

What if someone refused to believe in this invisible, artificial restrictive box. This not to say all personal data no longer exists in all the many medical, personal, and/or government files. What I mean to ask is what would happen if we could learn how to not restrict our capabilities and creativity because the box, or the world in general, doesn't expect or want us to do things that are beyond what is expected of us? Is it possible to forget that the sixth grade teacher said we cannot sing or that a good friend criticized a short story we once wrote? Why should others' opinions and old school records decide what we can and cannot do? Creativity is restricted when our thoughts are affected by those who feel comfortable by keeping us confined by artificial means. Only independent thought is truly free thought. Only free thought will fully develop creative thought. Don't think outside of the box, forget there ever was a box.

As I road a elevator this morning, I notice the elevator car had been lined with padding for used to protect the walls when transporting large item. I imagined that I was in a padded cell or box and it occurred to me that I could sit in that cel for the rest of my life and still be creative by ignoring my physical restrictions and space. In my mind I could still be anywhere I wanted to be and experience thoughts and feeling unrelated to my cell. When I was younger, I used to waver between ideas expressed by others because I didn't know which to subscribe to. Only in old age have I set my self free to believe what I want not what I am expected to believe.

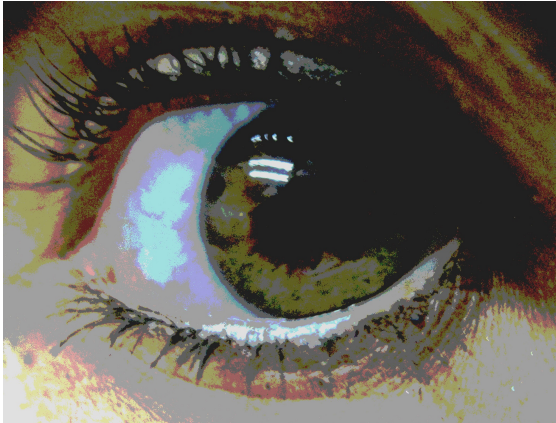
Student exercises

1. Look at the photo below. Here are four individuals. What assumptions could you make concerning these four as a group and as individuals. List the various boxes they could belong to. List the possible mistakes you may have made in your assumptions and boxes.



2. Look at a picture of your self and answer the same questions in question number one.
3. What boxes do you most relate to? How do such boxes restrict your private thought?
4. What boxes do you feel others attach to you? Do these assumptions restrict your decisions?
5. How can you exercise free, unrestricted thought without regard to any artificial label?
6. Do one of the following tasks:
 1. Write a short story, poem or an article about an event, and submit it to a local newspaper or magazine.
 2. Create a work of art and hang it in your office.
 3. Organize a family event or project such as a reunion or a collection of family stories.
 4. Volunteer to help or organize a community event.
 5. Tutor a school child.
 6. Pick any other activity that interests you but you have never tried before.

Chapter 6 Extending your senses



Those my age most likely remember the TV show The Six Million Dollar Man, where the main character Steve Austin, bodily damaged in an accident, was rebuilt by scientists using technology that turned his body into a machine that could do things the regular body could not do. He could outrun a car and jump over buildings. Many children of the time talked about what it would be like to have a body tune up to do what others could not do.

The truth is that if we could tune not only our bodies, but our senses, to operate more effectively, we could accomplish great things. I doubt we cannot learn to see through solid walls or hear a pin drop 100 miles

away, but we can tune our senses to work better.



I can't help sharing a true story at this juncture. I remember one day at a doctor's appointment when I told my doctor that I seem to see things that others can't see. My doctor, being used to my sense of humor was not shocked by this statement, but wisely asked me, "what do you mean by seeing things?" The statement on my behalf was a real and I did want to talk it out, so I quickly assured the doctor that I was hallucinating or seeing objects that really were not there. My issue was that I seemed to see answers to problems that others could not see and when I explained the answers, others still did not understand. My doctor visibly relaxed after I further explained my extraordinary sight.

I can't remember my doctor's actual response, but I do remember we had a discussion about why some people see concepts that are further away than others. In this world, there are obviously big picture thinkers and detail thinkers. The world needs both types of thinkers if we are to progress. But, some people, like myself can see the big picture better than most, but I find that I am almost blind when it comes to seeing the details. Others are just the opposite. They are detail people who are blind to the greater plan. I have always found that when I lead a project that I have greater success when I team with someone who can handle the details.

Knowing your blind spots is the first step in improving your senses. Just like the tuned up Steve Austin who could run at 100 miles per hour, working with improved senses can help anyone perform at a higher level.

We all have sensory blind spots. We see concepts with blinders on. We hear what we want to hear. Even our senses of touch and smell can deceive us at times. I am more of a visual person so my experience may tend to be visual centric, but I believe we can work to improve the use of all of our senses.

Visually, I try to stretch my visual understanding in everything I see. Presently I am sitting in a doctor's office looking at the floor and trying to imagine how it would look if it suddenly split open as in earthquakes seen in old movies. I not only see the floor as it is, but how it could be under other conditions. This same concept could apply to the use of any other sense or even combination of senses. If the smell of an apple can lead a person to taste that apple so as to compare the relationship of the smell to the actual taste, then could the taste of burning tires be imagined by just smelling? What also can be imagined through touch or sound? Could shapes be determined with sound alone, maybe with a limited addition of touch?

An enhanced capability to record or imagine sensory responses may lead to creative solutions or